

Seattle Light Rail Review Panel

Meeting Notes for December 5, 2001

Agenda Items

- STart Program Update
- North Link SEIS Update
- Beacon Hill Station Design Guidelines
- Platform Tactile Materials

Commissioners Present

Rick Sundberg, Chair
Matthew Kitchen
Jay Lazerwitz
Jack Mackie
Don Royse
Mimi Sheridan
Paul Tomita

Staff Present

Debora Ashland, Sound Transit
Cheryl Sizov, CityDesign
Kathy A Dockins, CityDesign

LRRP Business

Drafts of letters from the Design and Planning Commissions to Mayor-elect Nickels were distributed, and the Panel asked staff to work on a letter from LRRP to the Mayor, complementing the Commission letters in substance and tone.

Draft Beacon Hill Design Guidelines were discussed, with the Panel directing staff to publish them after clarifying some of the text to provide more definition to objectives. John Walser said that the ST design team already has a copy of the draft Guidelines and is using them in their work.

Kathy asked who needed parking passes and distributed forms to fill out.

Cheryl discussed "term of service" on the Panel with everyone. Jay asked when the STart Program work would recommence and also finish, since that affects his interest and purpose for serving on LRRP. This comment segued into the STart Program update.

STart Program Update

Carol Valenta, Sound Transit

The STart Link Program has been reorganized and artists reassigned in response to the new initial segment for Central Link. All of the VAT (Visual Arts Team), were originally assigned to stations in the north end which are now not proceeding! The VAT have been reassigned as follows:

- Dan Corson/Beacon Hill station, and OCS with Norie Sato
- Tad Savinar/South 154th
- Norie Sato/systemwide elements including The Braid, along with MLK Corridor conceptual lead and OCS with Dan
- Nobi Nagasawa and Laura Haddid/not sure yet which station or other art projects they'll be assigned

We also have Michael Davis doing the arch and plaza art benches at Lander along with E3 corridor murals by ArtWorks or other artists. It now looks like Lida Bathos' artwork can be located on the Metro site originally proposed in 1996. Other artists include:

- Sheila Klein as lead for the McClellan touchdown structure and station
- Gail McCall, starting anew with proposals for metal artwork at Edmunds station
- Brian Goldbloom using granite for platform artwork at Othello
- Elizabeth Conner participating in the design of f the Hudson retaining wall
- Darlene Nguyen-Ely creating sculpture integrated into the entrance canopy at Henderson
- Plaza artworks, artists yet to be commissioned.

We'll be able to provide more details early next year.

Discussion

- What about art at the Maintenance Base? *(We don't have enough funding to include the artwork originally proposed for that location.)*
- Remind me what the approval process is...? *(Review of proposals by the SStart team, ST Internal Design Review group, LRRP, and City of Tukwila.)*
- Would it be valuable for us to see other stations and alignments outside Seattle? I am interested in understanding the rest of the stations as part of a larger system. *(South 154th in Tukwila should be ready by March.)*
- Will we see artwork alongside the station design at 60%? *(Yes, you'll even see the artwork for Beacon Hill at 30% next time. We are struggling with the issue of artwork that wouldn't be built for eight years—it will be a real challenge to keep it fresh and exciting given that long lead time. I've worked on projects 5–6 years in the future, but never 8 years!)*
- I hope the artists will have an opportunity 8 years hence to reflect again on the artwork before proceeding into construction. *(Yes, we're planning a budget contingency for that.)*

North Link SEIS Update

Ron Endlich, Sound Transit

The North Link SEIS is divided into three parts: South Lake Union, Ship Canal, and Northgate. We are revisiting the preferred route and looking at new routes. Scoping ended on November 9th; we had two public open houses and received 105 comments expressing a range of opinions. We are now working to have the Board narrow down route options by January 24th, 2002 in order to decide what to include in the DEIS.

Discussion

- What is generating the elevated route proposal down Boren Avenue? *(An interagency team looked this summer at how to serve the South Lake Union area, and this option responds to their interests. It would serve the heart of the area with a Denny station serving the Denny triangle and a Mercer station serving the Fred Hutchinson area. However, this route appears to be more expensive than originally thought and with lower ridership too. We probably won't study it much further.)*
- What about the impact of ignoring Capitol Hill and First Hill? *(There are major trade-offs between costs and ridership. We are evaluating options against a variety of criteria. The reason we are back to this evaluation stage is the high costs of the original LPA.)*
- Do ridership projections account for development potential in the South Lake Union, or other, areas? *(Forecasts represent "expected growth" and that is what the Board has to look at, even if some feel growth will exceed forecasts. There could end up being more ridership in the South Lake Union area,*

but it still won't match Capitol Hill/First Hill. South Lake Union is still 20-30% lower than Capitol Hill even with the most optimistic projections.)

- What are the potential station locations? Convention Place? Mercer is at the heart of the traffic mess there! What about Husky Stadium and a connection to 520? *(Most alternatives assume no rail, just bus service, at Convention Place on the grounds that we didn't think it was needed before, so why include it now. Mercer would be elevated and therefore less expensive (than tunnel?) even when assuming a pedestrian overpass at Fred Hutchinson.)*
- Husky Stadium to Harrison is a long way between stations—you should connect with 520. *(The original LPA also had a large gap there, which didn't trouble us because the densities are so low. The translake study is looking at roadway expansion but recommending not to build rail. It is difficult to serve campus and 520; it is a trade-off between where and who you're trying to serve.)*
- What are the financial assumptions at this point in the project? Is there carryover from the initial project and what timeframe are you working toward? (The Board preserved \$300-400 million for North Link. We're assuming another federal funding grant, but also want to find cost savings. We will put together a financial plan including taxing plans.)
- The question of cost effectiveness is so critical to review. Different alternatives will "cross" one another in term of costs and impacts. *(Costing out 10 years versus 50 years gives different answers.)*
- So much of losing or gaining ridership is bound up with Capitol Hill and First Hill. (Part of the reason we are looking at Montlake is to see if the soil there makes it easier to build cut and cover stations versus expensive deep tunnel ones.)
- The largest market in the University District is the UW hospital complex. There are more vibration issues there too, and I imagine a shallower tunnel could mean more vibration impacts. *(A benefit with a shallower station is the ability to use stairs and escalators.)*

Platform Tactile Materials

Greg Ball, Sound Transit

For this portion of the meeting, the Panel and guests moved to a mock-up of tactile materials that had been set up in the parking garage. Greg Ball described the project from there as a combined effort of the Citizen Access Committee, PSTC, the Architectural Focus group, Sound Transit, and STart. Norie has been working closely with us on this as well. There are three components of the platform tactile materials:

- Platform edge and warning surface—yellow with truncated domes as required by ADA;
- Waiting area and station cover—the location where the two central car doors will be is proposed to be 2' ribbed tactile pavers; and
- The "braid" tactile path that is 8" wide and goes from the ticketing area through the platform.

This arrangement of materials and zones is good for both blind and sighted persons. The braid is also a visual link between stations, and has several components to it as well.

Discussion

- I'm a little concerned about the 90 degree turns, in that that is often the longest distance to travel.
- The braid is so narrow—how will people find it?

The Panel was generally pleased with the mock-up and expressed support for the concepts. The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:45 pm.